

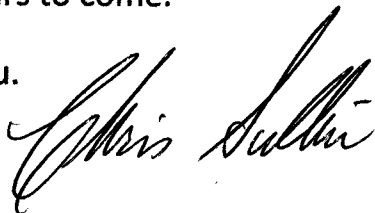
Written Statement against HB 629

3/26/2013

Regarding HB 629, the Montana Water Negotiation Commission has succeeded in creating a compact that will change the status of productive agriculture in Western Montana forever. It seems that the commission would prefer to discombobulate agriculture in Western Montana and abolish the productivity that many farm families have striven to develop over the last century. I would be happy to support any bill, or for that matter, any compact, that would treat the residents of the area with respect and fairness. The Compact Commission's proposals do nothing more than offer lip service to protecting agricultural and farm families. HB 629 is not beneficial to the majority of citizens of Montana.

For the most part, this compact is supported by people that have nothing to lose in any agricultural endeavor by the compact's implementation. The compact would only serve to gainfully profit a small group of people who would be able to "lease" water on a yearly basis. It also serves to give these same people quantities of taxpayer money for various "projects". The present compact proposals would deteriorate the agricultural and business community in a significant region. The 1855 Treaty allowed certain Fishing and Hunting rights. Native fishing was for subsistence. It was an aboriginal necessity at the time. There were few grocery stores stocked with agricultural goods or commodities in the area. Times have changed significantly since 1855. Sacrificing "hard earned" agricultural development does not constitute a realistic or well balanced approach to water compact negotiations. Please do not support HB 629. The consequences of allowing support in any manner to the present proposed Water Compact would be disastrous and those disasters would clearly become obvious in the years to come.

Thank you.



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